

"God's Cafeteria"

~~*The*~~Internal~~,~~External~~,~~Eternal~~*Choice*~~*~~~~

Text: Judges 10:14, Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

Scripture: Judges 10:6-18

Someone once said, "Marriage is like a cafeteria, you pick out what you want and pay for it later." Some people may make this statement truthfully because for them marriage is not the ideal they pictured it to be. But I believe this statement ~~xxxxxx~~ should be said about life more than marriage. "Life is like a cafeteria, you pick out what you want and pay for it later."

I believe that ^{life holds} ~~God has given mankind~~ all sorts of things to choose from, and what we choose we must pay for at a later time. I believe that God gives us the life in which to make these choices, and so I see this life as ~~xxxxxxxx~~ being similar to a cafeteria, God's Cafeteria if you will.

Israel had turned from God following the death of Joshua. They had become worshipers of the idols of their heathen neighbors. It was at this point that God raised up people who became their leaders and began to be called judges. These judges, although the name is erroneous according to our understanding of a judge, were ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ 12 common men and one common woman, who rescued or saved Israel at different critical points. ~~in their~~ These people were from different tribes, and they were not above reproach as seen by the lives of some of them namely Ehud, Samson, and Jael. But God used them to rescue His people from their sin and idolatry.

So what we read for our scripture this morning is the typical fare of this book of Judges. It is not surprising then that the block of Scripture we read starts out, "And the children of Israel did evil "AGAIN" in the sight of the Lord." It goes on to ~~state~~ name the heathen gods they worshiped, and how God became angry with them and permitted them to be sold into slavery. They suffered greatly under this oppression, so that they clamored to God and begged to be freed of their bondage. They confessed their sin and admitted their mistake, (vs 10). But God spoke to them and told them of their release from the bondage of the Egyptians, and from all of the others who had oppressed them since their flight from Egypt. God reminds them that they had forsaken Him, and not He they and God

declares that He will not deliver them anymore, (vs 13). He advises them to, (read text, vs 14). It is then that we read of the Israelites cleaning up their lives and turning back to the proper way of living, and seeking someone who will again lead them, (vss 15-18).

This story of the lives of the people of Israel is a story that is and has been repeated time after time in our 20th century. We like to look around us and see that this is the story of other people. Those people out there somewhere, which makes it quite elusive and far removed from us. Thus we assure ourselves that we are not referring to ourselves, or more particularly me individually. But it does involve us, and it does involve me individually. We see in this story that these people ~~had to~~ not only had to look at their lives, but they had to make some hard choices. This was the difficult part, the choices. They had to give up their strange gods if they were to be blessed by the one true God. And as we stand on the threshold of another New Year, we can see that we need to make some choices, and to do so means that we must do away with the strange gods we have chosen.

The formula I have arrived at to accomplish this is what I call the "Double I, Double E Choice." This merely an abbreviation for the Infernal, ~~Externally~~ Internal, External, Eternal Choice. Now what all of this amounts to is that we need to go through "God's Cafeteria" of life and make our choices. We must remember of course that as we choose, if we make the wrong choices we can only "go and cry unto the gods we have chosen; and let them deliver us in the time of tribulation." Meaning of course that if we choose other gods, we have only ourselves to blame and must bear the responsibility for that choices, or choices. What we take, or choose, we must live with and that is final. We must also remember that these choices are made by each of us individually and not by our wives or our husbands, or our mothers or fathers, or sisters or brothers. But by each of us personally. So we need to know the choices we need to make. The first choice we must make a determination for is that old Infernal question, "What must I do with Jesus Christ?" This question has bothered man since Jesus Christ stepped upon the stage of life. Pilate at His trial asked the question,

"What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate was merely exhoing this question which has plagued mankind ever since. Dwight L. Moody the great old time Evangelist ~~once~~ addressed one of the largest crowds of his career in Chicago on October 8, 1871. His message was based on this question of Pilate, and he told his audience that the following Sunday he would speak on the cross, and he wanted all of them to think about the question, "What will you do with Jesus?"

(Continuation of illustration of Moody's Mistake).

So we need to see the urgency of the answer to this Infernal question, and we each need to answer what we will do with Jesus.

We next need to consider this choice Internally. It is only from the heart that we can decide what our choice will be. We can have all sorts of educational degrees, and we can have the highest IQ in our town. But this will not gain us salvation. It is only through the heart as Paul says that we can accept Christ as our Saviour. Thus we see that we must make the choice of whether to accept or reject Jesus Christ, and we must internalize this or do it with our hearts and not our minds or our intellects.

We must then Externalize this choice if we have made it. Again quoting Paul we read that "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This means that we not only speak it, but we show it outwardly. Jesus says that anyone who is ashamed to profess Him before men, He will be ashamed to profess before God. Thus we can see that we need to make the verbal acceptance, as well as the outward physical acceptance. In church this means that we must be willing to come before the altar and make this public acceptance. This is not an outward show to prove to others how good we are, but it is an outward sign that we are not ashamed to show that we believe in Jesus Christ.

must not only
But we Externalize this ~~not only~~ in a service of worship, but in our daily lives as well. Being a Christian, whether a new one or ~~an~~ one of many years, means that we witness or speak of Jesus Christ ~~by~~ ^{with} our mouths, as well as with our lives. (Illustration of woman in India). This is how all Christians should live. But strangely enough some men do not want their wives to be Christians, and some

wives do not want their husbands to display their new found Christianity. Neither of them will state why not, but the underlying reason is that the mate who has newly found Christ and shows it, makes the other one feel inferior in his or her faith. Thus we see that a husband or wife accepting Christ, sometimes has an adverse effect on the mate because of a misconception of what it is all about. Thus far we see that we must make the choice, doing so Internally, and ~~exhibiting~~ professing this publicly. Now we see that the choice we make is an Eternal one. So many people live this life with the wrong motives and reasons and discover only too late that this life is not eternity. This is merely the steppingstone to it. And regardless whether you feel you want to go to heaven or to hell, be certain of one thing that both heaven and hell are eternal. There is no damning by God to hell and then eternity is snuffed out. It is just as eternal as heaven except in a different way. Isn't it reasonable then that we should all be seeking to attain eternity by going to heaven? Then why do people in all walks of life concern themselves with the accumulation of property and goods, and possessions and material goods beyond that which they can possibly use? The reason is merely that they have not come to grips with what life is all about.

We like to think that we will all live to be 70 or 80 and there is plenty of time to settle the problem of eternity. But this is not always so.

(Illustration of young man & heart attack, & Neil Armstrong and 1/100 inch of rubber between life & death.)

These are sobering thoughts are they not? Yet we can determine our eternal destiny in one short ~~moment~~ moment. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me hath eternal life." Notice, He didn't say "will have" or "could have", But instead He said, "Hath." Thus meaning eternity begins the moment one accepts Him. Isn't this worth having? Doesn't it make more sense to provide for our eternal life, more than it does the accumulation of stocks and bonds and insurance policies for days we may never live to see? But here again, we must make the decision as to which god we will choose.

A minister tells a story that is all too prevalent in many of our congregations especially among what is known as the Mainline Denominations, such as ours.

It is good for us to draw near to God: We have put our trust in the Lord God. He is the strength of our hearts and our portion forever.

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
BUTLER, PENNSYLVANIA
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS JANUARY 4, 1976
REV. RALPH C. LINK, PASTOR
MRS. EUGENE STEPHENSON, ORGANIST
MR. RALPH COOPER, CHOIR DIRECTOR
JODIE MARTE, DAN BOSKO - ACOLYTES

ORDER OF WORSHIP 11:00 A.M.

PRELUDE "MUSIC FOR A CHURCH SERVICE" SALVADOR
PLEASE REMAIN SILENT DURING ORGAN CHIMES
*PROCESSIONAL HYMN No. 123 "AS WITH GLADNESS MEN OF OLD"
*ASCRIPTION - CHORAL AMEN
*EXHORTATION
*CONFESSION (IN UNISON) "EVER-LIVING GOD, BY WHOSE
MERCY WE HAVE COME TO THE GATEWAY OF ANOTHER YEAR; GRANT
THAT WE MAY ENTER IT WITH HUMBLE AND GRATEFUL HEARTS;
AND CONFIRM OUR RESOLUTION, WE BESEECH THEE, TO WALK
MORE CLOSELY IN THY WAY, AND LABOUR MORE FAITHFULLY
IN THY SERVICE, ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING AND EXAMPLE
OF THY SON OUR LORD. LET NOT THE ERRORS AND OFFENSES
OF THE PAST CLING TO US, BUT PARDON US AND SET US FREE,
THAT WITH PURER PURPOSE AND A BETTER HOPE WE MAY RENEW
OUR VOWS IN THY PRESENCE, AND SET FORTH UNDER THE GUIDANCE
OF THY SPIRIT, TO TRAVEL IN THE PATH WHICH SHINETH MORE AND
MORE UNTO THE PERFECT DAY OF THY HEAVENLY KINGDOM. AMEN.
*KYRIE (CHOIR, CONGREGATION AND PASTOR)
*ASSURANCE OF PARDON - CHORAL AMEN
*PRAISE
*PASTOR: 'O LORD OPEN OUR LIPS.
*PEOPLE: AND OUR MOUTH SHALL SHOW FORTH THY PRAISE
*DOXOLOGY No. 551 How many Bibles?
SCRIPTURE: JUDGES 10: 6-18 " " " Read thru?"
HYMN OF THE MONTH 122 "O MORNING STAR, HOW FAIR AND BRIGHT"
*AFFIRMATION OF OUR FAITH (APOSTLES' CREED)
*GLORIA PATRI
*CALL TO PRAYER
*PASTOR: THE LORD BE WITH YOU.
*PEOPLE: AND WITH THY SPIRIT.
*PASTOR: LET US PRAY.
*PRAYER AND PRAYER RESPONSE
OFFERING
OF TORY "RETROSPECTION" MENDELSSOHN

SOLO: "I'LL WALKER WITH GOD" BRODSZY - SUNG BY
CYNDIE SYBERT
SERMON: "GOD'S CAFETERIA"

*HYMN OF INVITATION No. 214 "JUST AS I AM"
*BENEDICTION AND THREE FOLD AMEN
ORGAN POSTLUDE: "POSTLUDE" BOHM
----- *CONGREGATION STANDING -----
THE LOVELY FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR HAVE BEEN PLACED BY
MR. & MRS. CHARLES FLEEGER TO THE "GLORY OF GOD".
SERVING AS USHERS TODAY ARE: *ALLEN BOTACCHI, JOHN
REDMAN, DAN BOSKO, ROBERT KANUER AND CHARLES PENAR.
DEACONESS JOAN MASTERS AND SON WILL REPRESENT COUNCIL
AT THE DOOR TODAY.
THE ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY - 207.
NURSERY WILL BE PROVIDED TODAY BY: MRS. BERTHA
HOLLEFREUND, SUE HOLLEFREUND AND PAULA STEPHENSON.
MONDAY - 7:00 - ALL GROUPS HAVE EITHER PRESIDENT OR
REPRESENTATIVE AT THE MEETING IN THE UNDERCROFT TO
SET UP SCHEDULE FOR THE NEW YEAR BOOK.
MONDAY - 7:30 - MARY PRUGH CIRCLE MEETING.
ALL ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD HAVE REPORTS IN FOR THE
YEARBOOK THIS WEEK.
HOSPITALIZED: MRS. EMMA HEGINBOTHAM, MRS. EVELYN
SHAKELY, MR. WILMER PFABE. ~~DEF THURSDAY - BABY~~
WED. - 7:30 - CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING.
THE NEWSLETTER WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY - PLEASE
HAVE ALL MATERIAL IN BY WEDNESDAY.
A NEW CLASS FOR YOUNG ADULTS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 18
TO 30 IS BEING FORMED. THE FIRST GET TOGETHER IS
PLANNED FOR SUNDAY JANUARY 11, AT 9:45 A.M. IN THE
UNDERCROFT. COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS WILL BE SERVED.
AN ERROR WAS MADE IN THE LETTER WHICH WAS SENT OUT
AND THE DATE WAS INCORRECT. THE CORRECT DATE IS
JANUARY 11 AND IF YOU ARE IN THIS AGE BRACKET WE
HOPE TO SEE YOU AT THE FIRST MEETING. THE TEACHER
OF THIS NEW CLASS WILL BE ROB SYBERT.
THE BUTLER FELLOWSHIP OF CHURCHES WILL MEET ON THURS.
JAN. 8, AT 7:00 P.M. AT THE NORTH STREET CHRISTIAN
CHURCH. A PROGRAM ON "DEATH WITH MEANING AND
DIGNITY" IS TO BE PRESENTED. THE MEETING WILL END
AT 8:30 AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

"God's Cafeteria"

Text: Judges 10:14,
GO AND CRY UNTO THE GODS WHICH YE HAVE CHOSEN: LET
THEY DELIVER YOU IN THE TIME OF YOUR TRIBULATION.

Scripture: Judges 10:6-18

Story Marriage lik Cafet, pik out wat want pay 4 later
Per sum peop say this tru Bcuz their marr no ideal
I Bliev shud B sed life lik cafet, pik out pay 4 lat
Bliev lif hold all sort choic & wat choz pay 4 later
"" G giv lif which mak choce, thus lif lik "G's Cafet"
EXEGETER SCRIP: Foll deth Josh' wors idol heath neigh
G rase JUDGES=Deliverers, 12 Men, 1 woman,
comm peop no perfect, bu G use rescu His peop sin
Start vs 6=comm fare bk Jdgs, want help, G refuse

TEXT: READ

This sam story 20 cent, we think others not us,
thos peop, thus elusiv & remov from us, not us collect
or me individ, but it is me individ
They had lk livs mak choic, & this diffi
Had giv up strang g's 2 B bless
On thresh Nu Yr we need mak choic, do way str G's
Formula=Dble I, Dble E = Intern, Intern, Extern, Etern
wat amt 2 go thru G's Cafet lif & mak choic
If mak wrong choic, can only, READ TEXT
We mak choic not wiv, hus, moth, fath, sis, bros, etc
We respons 4 choic
1st Choic=INFERNAL quest Wat Must I do with Js Xp?
Pilate ask & he echo ever since
(ILLUST Moody & his mistake) need C urg this quest &
must each answer wat will do with Js
Must consider choic INTERNALLY
Not IQ, degree, intellect, accept/rejec with hart only
then must EXTERNALIZE, P say, with mouth conf mad 2 sa
Not only speak but show outward, in ch cum 4ward.
this no out show, but outward sign we no asham Js XP
EXTERN not only service ch, but daily livs,
(Illus woman India as Xpian) mouth as well as lif
Wiv/husb turn off other Xpian=mate inferior in relig
mates hav misconcep wat relig all about
Choic ETERNAL= 2 many peop liv this etern lif, insted
this lif step stone 2 etern,
Sum peop equate hell as end, but it etern 2
Why do sum peop concern selv accum prop, possess, Byond
which can use? Reason=no cum 2 grip wat lif all bout
lik think all liv 70/80 but not so
(I' s yg man hart attack, Neil Armstrong)
Sover thots right? Yet can sttle etern destiny 1
moment

Js say, He Bliev on me HATH etern lif",
He no say, will hav, cud hav, But HATH
thus etern Bgin wen acpt Him

Isn't worth hav?

Duzn't mak mor sens provid 4 etern lif mor accum
stock, bond, insur policies 4 days may never see?

But we must mak decis which G we chooz

(Illus minist & cab driver)

If any U harbor thots Bcuz U do cert reg work this
ch,

or contrib cert amt, or Bcuz baptiz, confirm, commun

U R Saved, & hav salvation U R WRONG

It none these, U can work all lif ch, giv salary,
commun ever Sun, & no hav salv

It only persoaal accept Js Xp giv salv

Will sing Invit Hymn, I invit any who mad commit &
want re-dedic, te lif cum 4ward

if unsure commit & wud lik mak cum 4ward alstar rail

If never mad commit & wud lik mak, cum 4ward

If bakslid mad commit but no liv, cum 4ward

Do not look how good, how bad,

no look 2 husb or wiv this personal Btween U & God

Don't B bakward, Bashful or timid

No think Delay friends family,

this step each shud & must tak 4 etern & any incor

2 do so will B mor than mad up 4 at end this lif

If during sing of hymn little voice speak 2 U

that G's Holy Spirit urg U 2x 2 mak decis 2day

DO NOT PUT IT OFF til later date,

4 that day may never cum again

Now is the hour, 2day is day of salvation

Come & accept Xp as Ur Saviour 2day.

Shirley & Ralph Charles Link, Nancy Link, Dale with Lianne his wife, Lloyd Link with Karen his wife
 Jessica in front of Ralph C. Link
 Ethan and Alisha in front of R. Dale and Lianne Link (the eldest son & family)









Ralph C. Link
153 Keck Road
Sarver, Pa. 16055
(412) 352-1103

Born: April 9, 1929, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Married: December 15, 1951
Wife: Shirley Margaret Neill
Born: December 8, 1930, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Children: Ralph Dale Link, born May 11, 1955, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Lloyd Alan Link, born May 28, 1958, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Nancy Lynn Link, born March 15, 1961, Butler, Pa.

SCHOOLING:

Graduated from Perry High School, Pittsburgh, Pa.
June 1947

Lay Ministry School, Penn West Conference of United
Church of Christ, September 1965 to May 1969

Commissioned Lay Minister June 1969

Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, Pa.,
September 1970

Graduated from Lancaster Theological Seminary May 1974

Ordained to Christian Ministry March 10, 1974

PASTORATES:

As Lay Minister: short term, 1 month or less in
various churches 1965 to 1967

Emlenton Lamartine Charge of United Church of Christ
1967 to 1969

Short term in various churches 1970 until Seminary
entrance July 1970

July 1970 to December 1973 Student Pastor at Trinity
Charge, New Bloomfield, Duncannon, Pa., Penn Central
Conference, United Church of Christ

December 1973 to present, St. Paul's United Church of
Christ, Butler, Pa., Penn West Conference, United
Church of Christ

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

OF

Ralph C. Link

I am the youngest of five children. I was born just prior to the onset of the Depression. Our family was very poor. My father was an alcoholic and my mother was a very religious person who was searching for the Lord. During my childhood she did her best to teach me the things of the Lord. Later in life she came to a personal relationship with Him.

I grew up in the Evangelical and Reformed Church where salvation by grace alone was not preached nor taught. I knew all about Jesus, what He did, how He lived, His miracles, His death and resurrection, but I didn't know Him personally.

My life had many ups and downs and all the while I was attending church and striving with my good works to please God. At a very low point in my life when we were deeply in debt and my wife and three children were all ill, I came to the crossroads. I watched a Billy Graham Crusade on television from some distant city and the message he preached seemed to be directed right at me. I wrestled with making that commitment to Christ, but didn't. The next afternoon and evening at work on the 4 to 12 shift I came to the conclusion that I needed to make that commitment to Christ. It seemed like there was no other choice if life was to have any meaning. That night when I came home from work at 1:00 A.M., I laid face down on the living room floor and told God that I couldn't live my life in my own strength and I accepted the gift of salvation from my Savior Jesus Christ. My life has never been the same.

Through several meaningful circumstances I was called by God to serve Him in the Christian Ministry and to help spread that wonderful message of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. What a wonderful and rewarding time it has been and I give Him all the praise for my salvation and the opportunity to serve Him.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

OF

Ralph C. Link

I believe the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired inerrant Word of God. I believe the Bible is the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and it is the final authority for the Christian faith and life.

I believe in one God, who is eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I believe in the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ that He is true God and true man. I believe that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He lived in sinless life, that He performed the miracles recorded in Scripture, that He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, that He bodily arose from the dead, that He ascended on high where He is at the right hand of Almighty God as our intercessor.

I believe in the Holy Spirit and that He comes and indwells each believer at the time of conversion. I believe that He lives in each believer to lead, to instruct, and to convict so that a believer may live a more godly life.

I believe that through the shed blood of Jesus Christ and through His resurrection, this is the only ground for justification and salvation for all who receive Him. A Lord and Savior and to such as receive Him, they are born of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

I believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances of the Church but are not means of salvation.

I believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I believe in the resurrection of the dead, for the believer to resurrection of life and joy with the Lord, for the unbeliever to resurrection of judgement and everlasting punishment.